(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps to be taken by Government to improve the situation in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) According to a 2007 World Bank study "Unleashing India's Innovation: Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Growth", India's demand for highly educated and skilled knowledge workers outstrips the supply. The report states that the high demand is partly fuelled by India's popularity as an R & D destination for multi-national corporations and partly by blossoming of India's IT and IT-enabled service sectors.

(c) For meeting demand of highly educated and skilled workers, the University Grants Commission identifies the universities and colleges with potential for excellence and gives financial assistance to universities and colleges. UGC is also implementing a Special Assistance Programme (SAP) wherein assistance is given to eligible Department of universities having potential for quality teaching and research in various disciplines. UGC also approves vocational courses in several universities. The Government is implementing Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme (TEQIP) for improving the quality of technical education. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has also an All India Board of Studies in Information Technology, which advises the Council on, *inter-alia,* the model curricula for IT courses and their upgradation. Besides, a programme of Finishing School for unemployed engineering graduates, so as to prepare them for the IT/ ITeS Industries, has been taken up since 2007-08.

Ministry of Labour and Employment has also taken up the following new schemes to increase the skilled workforce in the country:

(i) Upgradation of training infrastructure of 500 Government ITIs, 100 ITIs with the funding from Government of India whereas 400 ITIs with the assistance from the World Bank.

(ii) Upgradation of remaining 1396 Government Industrial Training Institutes under Public Private Partnership.

(iii) A scheme under the title "Skill Development Initiative" has also been taken up to impart short term Modular Employable Skills under which 231 short term courses have been developed.

Central Board of Secondary Education and various other Examination Boards offer vocational streams and vocational courses including IT-related courses at the higher secondary level for skill development.

Charges in private schools

359. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that private recognized schools in Delhi and National Capital Region are selling application forms and prospectus at high prices and are also charging high registration fees; and

(b) what is Government's policy on such charges and what is the regulatory framework for operation and charging of fees and other costs by private recognized schools in Delhi, NCR and other parts of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) The Government of NCT of Delhi have not received any complaint about selling of application forms and prospectus at high prices and charging of high registration fees by the private recognized schools in Delhi. The Government of NCT of Delhi has issued guidelines on 15.12.1999 regarding charging Registration Fee, Admission Fee, Caution Money, Tuition Fee, Annual Charges, Earmarked Levies, Development Fee etc. in respect of all recognized unaided schools. As regards private recognized schools in National Capital Region and other parts of the country, it is for the concerned State Governments to regulate such issues.

Minority institutions deprived of mid-day meal

360. MS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) how many schools managed by the minority institutions in the tribal areas of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat etc. do not get mid-day meal in the primary schools;

(b) why there is such a discrimination for children of BPL families, as the mid-day meal for poor should be universal; and

(c) by when Government proposes to make mid-day meal universal at least for the children of BPL families?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (c) All children studying in primary classes (I—V) in Government Schools (including Local Body), Government aided schools, including those managed by minority institutions, and centres run under Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) are provided mid-day meal. Children of BPL families, in case they are studying in above institutions, have been covered under the programme. The programme has been extended to upper primary stage of education, *i.e.* classes VI—VIII with effect from 1.10.2007, in Government (including Local Body), Government aided schools, and EGS/AIE centres in 3479 Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs). The number of EBBs covered in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat are 203, 75, 203 and 85 respectively. The programme will be extended to all areas across the country from 2008-09.

Children out of school

361. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that seven million children in the age group of 6 to 14 years are still out of school;

(b) whether Government would make education a fundamental right and if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government would allocate separate funds to the States to establish primary schools; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?